

for continued U.S. assistance for dismantling these weapons of mass destruction. This applies only to CW/BW destruction and not to any other Russian assistance, such as the Nunn-Lugar programs.

I hope all my colleagues support S. 495. It toughens our domestic laws on those who use these weapons. For all the talk about chemical weapons, little has been done domestically to punish users of these horrible weapons. This bill will do just that. Support this bill and let's make it known that we will not tolerate the use of these weapons against American citizens or any other people.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today in support of S. 495, the Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat Reduction Act of 1997. In the wake of World War I, nations from all around the world came together to sign the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Having witnessed the horrible effects of poison gas in battle, this agreement banned its use in interstate conflict. However, at the time no provisions were made in U.S. law to establish criminal or civil penalties pertaining to such weapons.

Today, for the first time, legislation has come to the Senate floor that provides criminal and civil penalties for the unlawful acquisition, transfer, or use of any chemical or biological weapon and gives domestic law enforcement authorities the needed legal basis to enforce prohibitions on chemical weapons activities within the United States. Most importantly, in light of recent domestic terrorist attacks and the actual release of Sarin gas in a Tokyo subway, S. 495 allows the death penalty for the use of chemical or biological weapons that leads to the loss of life.

From the international perspective, this legislation conditions continued United States aid to Russia for chemical and biological weapons dismantlement and destruction upon Russia demonstrating that it is abiding by existing agreements in this area. It urges enhancement of multilateral regimes to control trade in chemical and biological weapons-related materials, while requiring that the United States continue strengthening chemical and biological defenses, particularly in terms of equipment and training. Finally, S. 495 establishes, for the world, U.S. policy on the use of riot control agents and permits the use of tear gas for such things as the rescuing of downed pilots.

The Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat Reduction Act of 1997 augments existing international norms and agreements by establishing a framework for U.S. sanctions against nations which use chemical or biological weapons and by directing the Secretary of State to convene an international negotiating forum for the purpose of reaching an agreement on the enforcement of the 1925 Geneva Protocol which bans the use of chemical weapons in war.

I wish to point out that supporting S. 495 is not in conflict with the ratifica-

tion of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Instead it complements the CWC by reducing the threat of acts of terrorism and armed aggression against the United States involving chemical and biological weapons. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and take a step toward making our country safer with a comprehensive plan that provides realistic and practical measures to combat the dangers of these repugnant weapons.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for not to exceed 1 minute as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Vermont may proceed.

SENATE TRADITIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I just had reason to go and check the RECORD on something and realized a change had been made in the Office of the Official Reporters of Debates. In the 22 years I have been here, it has been right off the floor, which is the logical place for that office to be.

I guess I am sort of a traditionalist. I believe that traditions that work should take precedence over perks that some may want. Frankly, I have no idea who made this decision to do all these changes. I do not think it is a good one. As a Senator who prefers tradition over perks, I wish things would go back to the way they were. Sometimes we should realize as Senators, we are only here temporarily. The Senate outlasts us.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS THREAT REDUCTION ACT OF 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. 495, the Chemical and Biological Threat Reduction Act of 1997, offered by the Senator from Arizona, Senator KYL, and others.

There has been criticism of this legislation by Members of the Senate as

well as by the administration. The criticism largely centers around charges that it falls short as an alternative to the Chemical Weapons Convention [CWC].

I do not know what the outcome will be of the Senate vote on advice and consent to ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This legislation could possibly be an alternative in the event two-thirds of the Members present do not vote for the treaty. On the other hand, it may also complement the treaty, if it passes.

I want the RECORD to be clear, whatever the outcome of the vote on the CWC, I support efforts by the Senate to provide comprehensive criminal, civil, and other penalties for the acquisition, possession, transfer, or use of chemical or biological weapons. I also want the RECORD to reflect my continued support for the destruction of the U.S. unitary stockpile.

I urge my colleagues to vote for S. 495.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I proudly stand here today as a cosponsor of S. 495, Senator JON KYL's Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat Reduction Act of 1997. First and foremost, I want to thank the good Senator from Arizona for his commitment and hard work regarding chemical and biological weapon threats. This legislation certainly provides a comprehensive domestic and international plan to reduce the threat of chemical and biological weapon use.

It sets forth practical, realistic, and achievable nonproliferation measures to combat the very real dangers posed by these weapons.

Today the U.S. Senate will vote on the Chemical and Biological Weapons Threat Reduction Act. Mr. President, for the first time in U.S. history, we will have legislation that provides the needed criminal and civil penalties against those who produce, stockpile, and transfer chemical weapons in the United States.

Mr. President, as this body begins debate on the chemical weapons issue, I wholeheartedly believe that S. 495 will not only reinforce our strong commitment to eliminating chemical and biological weapons, but more importantly this legislation will provide our domestic law enforcement authorities the needed legal basis to enforce prohibitions on chemical weapons activities within the United States.

I have heard the arguments against S. 495, including that it amounts to the "U.S. go at it alone," approach. However, Mr. President, this bill sets forth a strong moral example for other nations to follow and in doing so underscores our commitment to global nonproliferation efforts.

Furthermore, through the Australia Group, the United States and its principal international partners have worked together to prevent the transfer of dual-use chemicals and chemical